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VOICE OF AMERICA

Office of Programs

DARI SERVICE PROGRAM REVIEW FOLLOW-UP NOTES

Program Review - May 10

Follow-up - June 16

On June 16, the follow-up committee with with representatives of the North Africa/Near East/South Asia Division and the Dari Service to discuss action taken on the recommendations made during the program review. Pashto Service Chief Richard Scott also attended the Dari follow-up session.

PROGRAMMING

To ensure the sharing of information between the Dari and Pashto Service, shift editors and service chiefs check with their counterparts on a daily basis. Newsroom Regional Desk Editor Bruce Barker said that both services are in daily contact with the Newsroom. He said that the South Asia desk is following the broadcast schedule for the Division more closely. As airtime approaches, the desk issues regional briefs as individual items or provides advance copy to meet broadcast deadlines. Mr. Barker added that no VOA correspondents have received visas to enter Afghanistan.

Service Chief Bram Hirsch told the panel that VOA Dari is making an effort to include coverage of international stories in newscasts and backhalves to supplement its targeted programming.

The Dari Service considers NEB Islamabad correspondent John Schulz a "vital source" of information in coverage of area-related stories. Mr. Schulz participates in a weekly "two-way" briefing with the Afghan Services.

PRESENTATION AND SOUND

Division Executive Producer Nancy Bouse commended the efforts of Dr. Hirsch to improve the sound of Dari broadcasts. In turn, the Service thanked Ms. Bouse for her assistance in working on the production recommendations. According to Ms. Bouse, Dr. Hirsch has originated production workshops and critiqued tapes. She credits Dr. Hirsch for the good progress and improvement noted during the follow-up period. Dr. Hirsch told the panel that the presentation in the backhalves "must continue to improve." To further these efforts, the Service holds daily production meetings and *post mortems*.

Ed Gursky of the Programs Office noted that Dari programs sound brighter. The Service has done a good job of presenting material in a conversational tone. The Service will continue to closely screen actualities from central scripts for audio quality.

SIGNAL DELIVERY AND MONITORING

Division, Programs Office and Frequencies Division representatives are considering a schedule realignment which might permit both the Dari and Pashto Services to combine current broadcast times and broadcast two one-hour programs daily, one in the morning and one in the evening. If feasible, these changes could be in place for the Winter broadcasting schedule.

VOA Dari Service Program Review Follow-up Notes - Page 2

Monitoring in Islamabad indicated continued periodic jamming of VOA Dari and Pashto. Monitoring reports are being received on a weekly basis. The Frequencies Division will inform VOA management of any changes in jamming.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

External Affairs will keep the Afghan Services informed about the possibility of obtaining results of a joint BBC/Radio Liberty survey of Afghan listeners in Pakistan. The survey will be conducted later this year.

WORTHY OF SHARING

- The Service's mail count totaled 140 letters in May. To date, 160 letters have been received in June. During the same period, the Service has received 18 cassettes from listeners who cannot write. Excerpts of these tapes have been broadcast during VOA Dari programs.
- During the June 13 daily housewide programming meeting, Deputy Director Barry said that he had spoken with Jon Glassman, U.S. Charge in Kabul, who volunteered praise of VOA's effectiveness in Afghanistan. In a subsequent SNAP mailnote, Ambassador Barry wrote:

He (Mr. Glassman) said the Embassy local staff, and by extension the rest of the populace in Kabul, relies upon VOA as the only accurate and credible source of news as to what is happening in Afghanistan. Despite jamming, the Afghan services are getting through.

Furthermore, Mr. Glassman said the Soviet and East European diplomats constantly cite VOA as their source of information on what is happening in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world. Even under glasnost, they do not see their own media as credible on the subject.

Copies of Ambassador Barry's mailnote were shared with the Dari Service staff.

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